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CIA Chief Sees Leftists Aided by Iran Split

Los Angeles Times

CIA Director Stansfield Turner warned yesterday that Iran's communists—denied real power so far in the revolution that toppled the shah—could become the only winners if turmoil continues between the civilian government and Islamic religious leaders.

Turner said the oil-rich and strategically located nation is facing increased polarization between those loyal to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini

and to the secular government of Premier Mehdi Bazarean.

Turner was asked at a breakfast meeting with members of The Los Angeles Times' Washington bureau to predict which side would win a showdown between the Khomeini and Bazarean forces. He replied, "Neither the leftists."

"That's my concern, because the leftists are well-organized and well-armed," he said. "If there is a split between these other two, it leaves an opportunity for the Marxist guerrillas

and terrorists to try to step in and take control."

Turner said the Soviet Union has played a very low-key role in Iran. "They are playing a two-track policy," he said. "They are quietly supporting the (Bazarean) government on one hand and undermining it with propaganda broadcasts and support for the Tudeh (Communist) Party on the other. They are still ambivalent because they haven't quite seen where it is going to go."